

## THE LABOR TROUBLES

## SPECIAL CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION OF LABOR TROUBLES.

Grand-Master-Workman Powderly before the Committee—He gives his impressions in regard to the conflict between Labor and Capital.

(By telegraph to the Dispatch.)

WASHINGTON, April 20.—The special committee of the House of Representatives to inquire into the labor difficulties in the Southwest held its first public session to-day. Owing to the difficulty of obtaining the use of a convenient room in the Capitol, the committee had to hire one in an adjacent building (the Congressional Hotel) at which the accommodations were very deficient. The hour of meeting was fixed at 12 noon, but it was half-past 1 before the committee got to work. It consists of ex-Governor Curtin, of Pennsylvania (chairman), and Messrs. Burns, of Missouri; Crain, of Texas; Outwater, of Ohio; Stewart, of Vermont; Parker, of New York, and Buchanan, of New Jersey. All the members were present except Mr. Stewart. Among the prominent persons in attendance were representatives of the Knights of Labor, T. V. Powderly, grand master workman; J. W. Hayes and William O. McDowell, members of the Executive Board; and Frederick Turner, grand secretary. As representatives of the railroad interests, Wager Swayne, counsel; and as representatives of the Women's League of America, Mrs. Charlotte Smith and three other ladies.

A corps of four stenographers was on hand to make a full report of the proceedings for the railroad companies. Mr. Powderly was the first witness, and as such was sworn by the chairman. Mr. Powderly was very far from filling, at least in outward appearance, the typical idea of a horny-handed son of toil. On the contrary, he appears to be a quiet, reserved, delicate-looking gentleman, who has spent some fifty years of his existence in an easy, contented way. He dresses plainly, is closely shaved, excepting as to a long, drooping mustache, wears spectacles, and has a high, intellectual forehead. The chairman, addressing him, said: "You understand that this committee is raised by the House of Representatives for the purpose, if possible, of getting down to the reasons for the unrest and disturbances which now exist in the country, especially as they now exist between labor and capital and between employer and employee. This committee is fully sensible of the course you have taken in your previous life, and of your disposition to reconcile the unrest of the people. Therefore we call you as the first witness. Be pleased now to give to the committee in your own language your impressions as to this matter."

From the chairman to Mr. Powderly, I know you well, and I know that you have intelligence enough to go on and give this committee the information it needs.

Mr. Powderly: When your message came to me I did not understand it, and came here without papers and without any knowledge of what would be required of me. The field which you have opened up in your question, and the consideration which it deserves in order to answer it properly, because it takes in the general question that is now being discussed by the working-people and by the business-people of the country, so that I would rather answer your questions as they are put, and then, if necessary, I will meet the committee again after I have procured my papers.

The chairman: What, in your judgment and opinion, is the cause of the disturbances now existing in the localities referred to in the resolution?

Mr. Powderly: The men who are now engaged in the difficulties in the West have drawn up a bill of grievances and have presented it to the manager of the Missouri Pacific road at St. Louis. That bill of grievances presents the views of the laboring men, and he stated that the bill of the present strike on the lines of the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company was the discharge of a man named Hall from the employment of the Texas Pacific Railroad Company, and it has been stated that immediately following his discharge and refusal to reinstate him the employees of all other railroads struck. This statement the employees of the railroad system known as the Gould system claim to be correct. They say that the discharge of Hall was one of the only ones, of the many causes of the action taken by them. Here is the official statement drawn up by the committee of District Assemblies Nos. 101 and 78 of Knights of Labor, and with your permission I will read it.

Powderly thereupon read a statement of the grievances referred to, and which has been already published in the newspapers.

The chairman: What knowledge have you as to the truth of the facts stated in that paper other than the statement itself?

Mr. Powderly: I have never given it my personal attention. When it was first brought to my notice I was engaged with the General Executive Board at Philadelphia, where we were holding a session. I saw through the newspapers that there was a strike on the Texas Pacific railroad, and that a strike on the Missouri Pacific road had followed it, but I heard nothing official on the subject until I received a dispatch from the vice-president of the Missouri Pacific, Mr. Hopkins, of New York, asking some questions. Immediately following that we telegraphed to the West for the particulars of the strike, and we received an answer somewhat similar to the statement which I read just now.

The chairman: From whom did you receive that answer?

Mr. Powderly: We telegraphed to a man whose name I saw in the papers—Martin Irons—but the dispatch in reply came from another man named Page. Then some mortgage bondholders of the Texas Pacific railroad came to see us, and asked if we could do something to end the strike. We then telegraphed to the receiver of that road.

The chairman: Can you give the names of those bondholders who came to see you?

Mr. Powderly: I know the name of their lawyer—Dickson. We asked of Governor Brown, one of the receivers of the Texas Pacific railroad, whether he would consent to meet with a committee appointed by our Executive Board for the purpose of arbitrating or settling the differences on the Texas Pacific road. His reply was that the road had no troubles with its employees, but that it had some disturbance with former employees, or something to that effect. A telegram was sent to Governor Brown as the urgent request of the people whose money was invested in the bonds of the Texas Pacific railroad, and who were anxious to have the matter settled. Failing in that attempt to settle it, I went West, and there I met with committees of workmen, including the men employed on the Union Pacific railroad and on the several lines constituting the Gould system, and there I

heard them make similar statements to that contained in the bill of grievances which I have just read. Then I telegraphed to Hoxie asking for an interview for the purpose of endeavoring to arrange some terms of settlement. He refused to meet me in an official capacity, but said he would meet me as a citizen. I had no authority to act as a citizen in the matter, and of course I did not meet with him. I came back East, and a few days after that I went to New York. The history of what took place there has been published so extensively in the press that it is not necessary for me to go over it. While I was in the West I heard from the men of little abuses which I do not think the Missouri Pacific railroad knows anything about. Along the Iron-Mountain railroad there is a system of taking 25 cents a month from the wages of a man who receives \$1 a day and 50 cents from the wages of a man who receives \$2 a day, and so on in proportion, for what they call a hospital fund. Then the men claim that as soon as they are taken sick they are discharged, and are denied the right of entering the hospital. Then there are instances, which can be proved, where the men have made contracts with the company on a regular yearly instalment, and where, having paid all but the last instalment, they were discharged from the employment of the company. In that section of country it is different from the East. Men can go into the next town and get a situation, and the consequence has been that, in at least one particular case, a man was obliged to remain idle so long that he lost his property.

The chairman: The men claim that there are several instances of that kind?

Mr. Powderly: I stated that in his inquiries he had found that the causes of discontent actually existed as described, and that he could have witnesses called to testify to them if his informants had been correct.

The chairman: Will you state the purposes of the organization of the Knights of Labor, whether its purposes are protection of the interests of labor, and whether it is peaceful in all its actions?

Mr. Powderly: The aim of the organization of the Knights of Labor is to benefit the laborer and to secure better feeling between him and his employer. All our methods are peaceful. We never consider anything of a violent nature. A member of the organization may once in a while commit acts of violence, but we cannot help that. It is a matter beyond our control, because when men feel that they have endured wrong there is no law which can properly restrain them.

The chairman: Do I understand that the Knights of Labor are an organization to protect labor, not only on railroads, but also in mines and factories?

Mr. Powderly: We attempt to do that. The association intended to be educational one. We aim at having our members study the conditions by which they are surrounded, not only their own conditions, but those of the men for whom they work.

Mr. Buchanan: In order to pave the way to intelligent action?

Mr. Powderly: Yes, sir. I have claimed that it is no more than right for both to meet on equal terms, and that I have not given it the consideration which it deserves in order to answer it properly, because it takes in the general question that is now being discussed by the working-people and by the business-people of the country, so that I would rather answer your questions as they are put, and then, if necessary, I will meet the committee again after I have procured my papers.

The chairman: What, in your judgment and opinion, is the cause of the disturbances now existing in the localities referred to in the resolution?

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## WASHINGTON.

## SAM. RANDALL AND THE TARIFF BILL BEFORE THE HOUSE.

What He Thinks It Will Lead To—Powerfully and the Railroad-Post-Office Matters.

(From Our Regular Correspondent.)

WASHINGTON, April 20.—Hon. Samuel J. Randall looks upon the tariff bill pending before the House as the stepping-stone in the way of a "reform" which will not stop short of placing iron on the free list after the movement is once inaugurated. It is claimed by protectionists that President Cleveland favors the present bill as a sort of a makeshift to the pledges of reciprocity to the Chicago Convention, and that it is his opinion that it is the cheapest way out of the dilemma. One thing is certain, and that is Mr. Randall has the courage of his convictions behind him, and will not relent one iota, Administration or no Administration.

The Curtin committee to investigate the strike on the Gould system met at the Congressional Hotel this morning. There was present, in addition to the committee, Messrs. Powderly, Hayes, Turner and McDonald, Executive Committee of the Knights of Labor. Mr. Powderly was the only witness examined. He had no elaborate statement to present, but answered all the questions propounded to him. He said the Executive Committee were formulating a measure to present to Congress which they thought would be of more benefit to the country than the measure now before the House. He said the committee had the honor to be invited to the House by the committee, and that he was glad to be present. He said the committee had the honor to be invited to the House by the committee, and that he was glad to be present.

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There was a very large crowd at Virginia Park yesterday afternoon to witness the second game between the Boston and Rochester teams. The former had but little difficulty in shutting out the latter, the score standing at the end of the game 8 to 0 in favor of the boys from the "Hub."

Each club presented different batteries from those which played on Monday, and the men seemed in better practice. Bullfinch pitched a very fair game, and the Rochester were unable to catch on to him for more than three singles and a three-bagger.

In the fourth inning the Rochester made three successive hits, and got as many men on bases, but the third man was put out before they could get a man across the plate. The best plays made during the evening were the three-base hit by Hackett and the double play by Whitney, Meyers and Kennedy.

Appended is the score:

BOSTON.	A.	B.	R.	H.	P.	O.	E.
Hornung, 1st	2	1	2	1	0	0	0
Whitney, 2d	1	2	1	2	0	0	0
Wadsworth, 3d	1	2	1	2	0	0	0
Hunt, 4th	1	2	1	2	0	0	0
McCarthy, 5th	1	2	1	2	0	0	0
Nash, 6th	1	2	1	2	0	0	0
Wadsworth, 7th	1	2	1	2	0	0	0
Morrill, 8th	1	2	1	2	0	0	0
Foran, 9th	1	2	1	2	0	0	0
Totals	39	8	11	17	15	2	0

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